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ABSTRACT

This book focuses on a common set of circumstances in Canada, the United States, Britain, Australia, and New Zealand in which increasing numbers of young children from minority language backgrounds are taught in mainstream English-medium classrooms. It provides a longitudinal ethnography of a group of children learning English in a Canadian school, from the beginning of kindergarten to the end of Grade 2. Data collected in each of the three grades are used to explore how practices with respect to identity construction, resource distribution, and discursive organization affect the children's capabilities for learning English. Chapter one describes the works of several sociocultural, poststructural, and critical theorists and explores how they might be applied to child second language learning. Chapters two and three describe the kindergarten classroom. Chapter four examines children's social relations in Grade 1. Chapter five follows the children to Grade 2 and examines the discourse practices regulating their appropriation of the classroom language. Chapter six discusses theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical ideas and problems emerging through the course of the research. The book concludes with suggestions for how schools and teachers might better support language minority children in their struggle to learn English. (KFT)

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